

DDI-557-75

27 February 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training  
THROUGH : Deputy Director for Administration  
SUBJECT : Criteria for Selecting Career Trainees

1. Our experience over the years with alumni of the CT and JOT programs has been quite satisfactory. Nevertheless, as you observed in your memorandum, budgetary constraints and our leaner staffing make it all the more important that we match recruiting efforts to probable job openings.

2. This is not easy to do, given the lead time required for processing applications and clearing prospective employees -- and, of course, for the CT program as well. But we will be taking a step in the right direction if we make certain that recruiters in the field fully understand what our offices do and what kind of people they need. Our office directors, especially those who rely on the program for a substantial share of their professional personnel, would be happy to meet directly with the recruiters and with the CT program managers to discuss personnel requirements.

3. As you know, the distribution of former CTs within the Directorate is far from uniform: OCI and OSR employ a sizable number, while some other offices rely largely on specialists hired directly from university campuses. Thus, you should probably be guided primarily by the requirements of OCI and OSR. Other offices, however, are a source of "internal" CTs -- as well as occasional consumers of the finished product. It would be beneficial if your people continued to touch base from time to time with all our offices.

4. The general qualities we look for in professional employees have not changed: a capacity for sound judgment, an ability to write clearly and concisely, facility in oral expression, and the attitude, temperament and motivation that enable individuals to work together effectively. Unfortunately, these qualities are often not measurable in advance, and for that reason we find the CT interim assignments particularly valuable. The attached comments by our office directors may give you some feel for the situation as we see it.

5. On the particular question of military service, we would not emphasize service in the armed forces unless an individual acquired specific skills he is likely to use during his Agency career. In the era of all-volunteer forces, many promising candidates will not have had military experience.

6. We think the CT program's general approach, with its emphasis on providing a good orientation to the many aspects of the Agency's work, is correct. A brief overview of such subjects as data processing and analytical methodologies might usefully be added, but any extensive training in these matters can best be done in separate, specialized courses that will be available to the CTs as their careers develop.

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EDWARD W. PROCTOR  
Deputy Director for Intelligence

Attachment:  
Views of DDI Office Directors

Distribution:

Orig + 1 - Addressee  
1 - DDI File  
(1) - DDI Chrono  
1 - Management Staff

VIEWS OF DDI OFFICE DIRECTORS

Office of Current Intelligence

The Career Training Program has been a particularly rich source of new talent for this Office. At any given time upwards of 50 percent of OCI professionals are former CTs or alumni of the preceding Junior Officer Training Program; at present, [redacted] persons on our rolls are former CTs. They comprise a gifted and highly regarded group. We are well pleased with the general calibre of the CTs who have joined us, and we are favorably impressed by the procedures through which they have been brought to us. Nevertheless, from our vantage point the selection process could be somewhat more responsive to our needs, and we believe that now is an especially appropriate time to talk about it.

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Perhaps we should begin by indicating those aspects of the CT selection process that seem to us well worth preserving. One practice we like is OTR's providing our area divisions with the folders of would-be CTs before they actually enter the program. This is useful because it helps us identify potential analysts early in the game, allows us to compare applicants well before a vacancy occurs and must be filled, and permits us to do some pre-planning with the CT office on whether and where specific CTs might find jobs here once their programs are completed.

Another eminently sensible feature of the selection process, it seems to us, is the practice of sending CTs to us on interim 90-day assignments. This works out very well and is of immense value both to us and, we think, to the CTs themselves. We suspect that further broadening of the interim assignment phase of the program would serve some CTs even better; those who find it difficult to choose at the outset among the various offices and types of careers available to them in CIA might profit from three 60-day interims instead of two of 90 days' duration.

Most of our suggestions for improving the selection process boil down to one central theme: we feel that we need to get involved in the process earlier and more fully than we do now. For a start, it would be most useful for the CT Program administrators to meet with us periodically and talk with us about our manpower needs. We also need to know more about the CT recruitment process so that we can provide better guidance on what we are looking for or, hopefully, participate more directly in the selection of those CTs who seem to have the best potential for OCI careers. Budgetary constraints being what they are, clearly the days of our being able to take on as many promising people as the CT program can muster at any one time are over. From now on there will have to be much closer coordination between OTR and ourselves if we

are to avoid having to turn away CTs who want to work for us. We want to keep the CT pipeline to OCI open, but because the pipeline will be smaller than it has been, we want to do our best to ensure that only the best-suited candidates get through it.

Here are a few specific suggestions. The recruiters who enlist CT candidates should thoroughly understand OCI's missions and needs; this might best be done by bringing the recruiters to us (or us to them) for detailed briefings on how we work. Also, we should be brought into the picture as early as possible when a CT applicant who looks like a promising prospect for OCI is brought to Headquarters for preliminary processing. Finally, OTR might be more active in working directly with professors and department heads who can steer the recruiters to those men and women who really have the aptitudes we are looking for.

Let's be more specific now about the aptitudes we look for in our new people. The qualities we prize most highly are a capacity for making sound judgments (i.e., analytical ability), an instinct for getting at the essence of the matter quickly and surely, and a talent for writing graceful, fluent English prose. (On the last point, we have found that skill in turning our scholarly papers does not always translate into success in our kind of writing.) Beyond this, we look for people who have initiative and drive, who work well under pressure, who are inclined toward an analytical rather than an operational career, and who have area expertise, including familiarity with the language of the area. We are increasingly interested in people who have training and interest in some of the "newer" methodologies of political analysis.

We suspect, however, that it may not be possible to identify all these virtues much more effectively in the recruitment process. The degree to which someone has or does not have them often does not show up until well after he or she is hired.

We feel that military experience per se is not as a rule especially relevant to our work. We do not consider academic excellence alone a valid indicator of a person's potential to make the grade with OCI. A skillfully researched doctoral dissertation may or may not reflect the kind of skills we need here; more germane to our needs are the abilities to think on one's feet, to conceptualize, and to retain a passion for objectivity.

One final point: it is most difficult to spell out with any degree of assurance what our specific recruitment needs will be in the medium and long-range future. We would, however, be pleased to try to work more closely with OTR to help make the selection of CTs for OCI an even more rewarding and successful proposition than it already is.

Office of Strategic Research

Academic excellence, an ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, and an interest in challenging research should be paramount considerations in selecting Career Trainees. A capability to employ certain foreign languages is useful and preferable but not a decisive indicator of potential or effectiveness. By the same token, prior area specialization can be used effectively in certain areas in OSR, but is not critical. Insofar as academic specialties are concerned, we have found that our successful analysts have had extremely varied academic backgrounds and experiences. No particular discipline appears to provide an edge. This is also true of military service, since it is our experience that the nature of our research problems is such that the lack of military service is not an acute hindrance in several areas, particularly at normal CT entry levels [REDACTED]

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There are criteria, not covered above, which we feel can only be assessed effectively during interim assignments or the probationary period. These are attitude, temperament and motivation, which are difficult, if not impossible, to assess or measure during interviews. On the whole, however, CTs who have been assigned to us have performed well in this regard, which speaks well for the selection process.

Office of Geographic and Cartographic Research

The CT Program is not a significant factor in OGCR hiring, but we are pleased by the performance and professional capabilities of the CTs we have on board. Based on our limited experience, the selection process should consider:

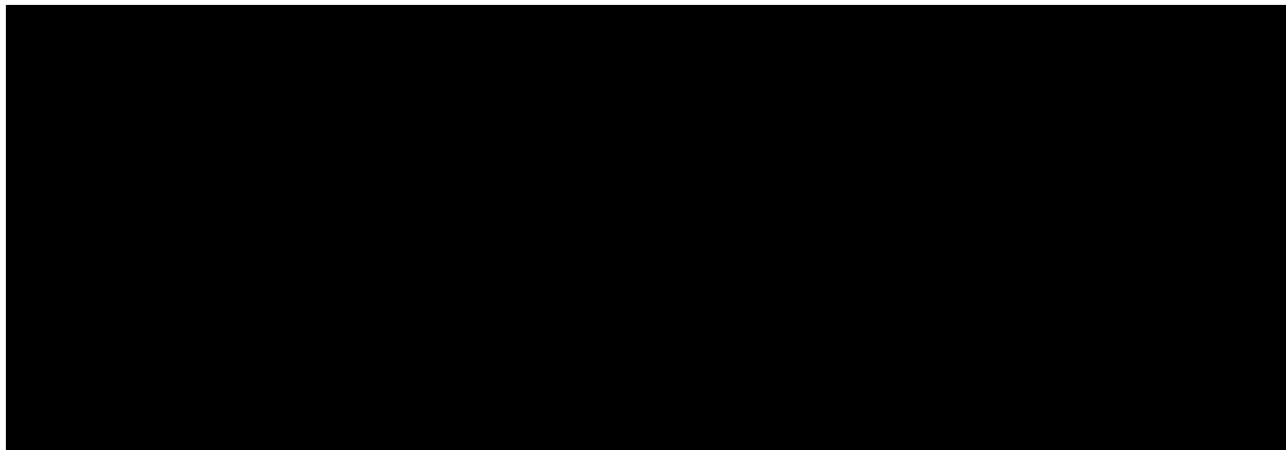
Academic excellence: This is necessary, but it also is hard to pin down. We are most interested in individuals who have mastered a broad selection of subject matter. This can indicate an inquiring mind and a real interest in the accumulation of knowledge. So we look beyond the Grade Point Average and the pile of geography-cartography courses taken.

Language: We need only Russian language capability. Time spent on other languages beyond a familiarization level is of secondary interest.

Area specialization: This is very important to us. If a prospective employee's primary interest is, for instance, in U.S. urban planning, the chances are he's not for us. Overseas travel, or at least extensive field work in the U.S. sufficient to broaden horizons and provide experience in other settings, would count with us.

New skills: The prospective employee for OGCR should have had some courses in, or otherwise acquired familiarity with, the use of computers as a research tool. Similarly, I would consider photo interpretation experience valuable.

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Other DDI Offices

The Offices of Economic Research and Political Research have found they can best meet their personnel needs by direct hire from the universities or by picking up experienced analysts from within the Agency. Highly successful former CTs are to be found in both offices, but neither office feels there should be any effort to alter CT recruiting practices to meet their special needs. Neither the Central Reference Service nor the Imagery Analysis Service is likely to absorb many CTs.